



NEW POEMS

J. MARJORAM

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NEW POEMS

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NEW POEMS

BY

J. MARJORAM, *poet.*



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TO
A. AND J. G.

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FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED.

CHARACTERS.

HE, a Sick Man.

SHE, a Memory.

SCENE.—*A Sick-room; yellowish light filtering through drawn blinds. There is a smell of drugs; and just too little light to distinguish anything. A movement on the bed reveals the presence of the Sick Man.*

HE. Turning wheels on shining tracks,
Faceless heads go rolling past; . . .
There's a fell beast that makes cracks
In the ceiling, clutches fast,
Seals my mouth when I would scream . . .
How shall I escape this dream?

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

SHE. (*Far away*) Pity, who goes abroad
Unseen, in the ways of men,
But for Thy touch, with healing stored
Ever beyond their ken,
The home of Thy heart is far
From their paths, and all they know
Of Thee is as of a star
That sometimes stoops to throw
Its light on them, below !

O Pity ! listen awhile !
The arc of Thy brow serene
Bend to my plea, and Thy smile,
Stoop from Thy height, incline
O'er a lover that once was mine,
Whose love I might have been. . . .
I do not ask, in vain,
That the trouble he bears should pass,
For to pray for the end of Pain

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Were to cause Thy death, alas !
But let me seem, in the guise
Familiar, dear to his heart,
To hover over his eyes,
Brush by his cheeks drawn hollow,
Glide where his temples ache,
Lighten a little the smart !

He. What is it you sing,
You whom I cannot see ?
And why do you bring
In a wave to me
The thought of a ghost ?
But a ghost of whom ?
Of a love I lost,
That dwells in no tomb,
But was cleft from me
By our Destiny.
Far into the Past, the utter gloom,

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Her spirit, a-wing,
Goes circling fast,
Drawing me irresistibly after it, home.

SHE. (*Soothing him*) Think of the fields at
the dim
Purple and grey of dawn,
The stubble shorn and trim ;—
To every stalk soaks through
Its draught of dew indrawn !
Here is a home for you !

Noon in the woods. The pool
By the fall, where the Naiads swim
In the birchen shade so cool,
Lit by the gleam of a smooth white limb
In silence beautiful—
Here is a home for you !

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Think of heather a-brim
With sound of bees ; of the blue
Folds of the moor beyond ;
The harsh-voiced moor-fowl skim
By the twin pines taut and grim
That guard the path-side pond ;
Here is a home for you !

Think of the lightless, windless sea
The soft sky rests upon
Starless. Almost noiselessly
A ripple has come and gone,
As came and went the wind so free,
Colours so brave. . . . Now, utterly,
Here, is Oblivion.

HE. (*Beginning to dream*) A door, a way, a
road at last !
A road of fine white sand ;

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

All the hedge a-whisper ; every leaf
Seems pregnant with the half-expressed belief
That I was meant to walk here. Cool and
bland

The air is, and I wonder why I know
What, at its turning, this deep lane will
show

SHE. The Moon turns scarlet, and hides Her
face

In a fold of purple evening cloud,
Whose dew bejewels the cobweb-lace,
And the harebells chime almost aloud,
For crickets swing their stalks . . . with his
brush

The squirrel's sweeping a dancing-place ;
Murmur of streams swells out in the hush
That broods on the moss at the old oak's
base.

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Quiet thee! Watch what befalls. . . . The
mole

Is donning his best black velvet cloak—
An owl may hoot, or a frog may call.
Shall we see the dance of the little folk?

HE. I have travelled this road before ;
These twin cliffs are not strange, . . .
The lane turns just as I thought it would.
These are the things that dare not change. . . .
I have fixed them fast in the Dream of
Dreams ;

Each one must be where each one seems. . . .
Here is the stile. . . . I need seek no more. . . .
The fields stop here, at the oak-wood's
shade.

Beyond the wood is the seaward hill
Covered with gorse. . . . My heart stands still
At the scent, and I walk—as if afraid.

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

For the lane leads past the hill to the shore
Whence she comes, whom I long to meet. . . .
And come she must ; I am certain now
It shall be, though I know not why nor how.
Here at the edge of the young green wheat
I will wait to watch how the squirrel spies ;
How Zephyr wanders up and down,
Shaking new odours from her looped gown—
Till every living being feels the sweet
Spring juices in it rise,
And thistledown flies—
And a young lamb cries—
And pushes to pass the hurdle ;
And the sound of a footstep haunting nigh
me . . .

(HE looks up. SHE is standing near him.)

Dear, how came you so near by me ?
What can you laugh about ?

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

And why that fresh white clover pluck
Unless to teach the bees to suck
The scent and honey out ?

(*To Himself*) 'Tis a girl with a sun-bonnet over
her ears,

And poppies in her girdle,
Steps over the stile, smoothes the hair from her
eyes. . . .

Ten steps from the stile, does that mean ten
years? . . .

She is fresh from the heart of Immortal Spring;
Is it dew on her cheeks, or tears?

SHE. (*Leading away*) Buttercup weds with
Pimpernel,

Daisy with blue Bird's-eye ;
Under the Briars they shall dwell,
The Sun and the Wind shall love them well,
And the rain not pass them by.

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

To a last year's leaf, brown crispèd shell,
Shall be harnessed the Butterfly . . .
Broad Chestnuts spread aloft for them,
Moss and Mould be soft for them,
For them the Aspens sigh . . .
They shall sport while Heaven is blue,
Yet, when it waxeth grey,
None shall be less afraid, more true,
None closer clasped than they. . . .
And when, at length, grown old, they die,
Then shall be hushed all Harebell chimes,
All streams repeating mazy rhymes,
As near together, near the heart of Earth they
lie.

HE. (*Trying to see her face*) Do thou but
lead, and hold my hand,

Then, soon and sure, we shall arrive

✓ In that untrodden Wonderland

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Whose people seek no more, nor strive ;
Implicit in their being flows
The law no human wholly knows,
But only strives towards, and sighs ;
The Law that governs loftier spheres,
Whose people, by its weight controlled,
Live free of all our doubts and fears,
Make but one harmony unfold
From individual melodies ;
Thither, by pathways thou dost know,
Do thou but lead, and after thee
I follow, as thy shadow fleet
Follows thy dance-inciting feet ;
Or bid me wait, and I will be
But as a dog, that eagerly
Watches thy every movement so,
But slinks behind, discreet.

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

SHE. (*Touching his forehead, and then eluding him*) Rest ! and quiet thee ! here is the hedge

Where the river gleams through its screen of rushes ;

The pasture, down to the water's edge,
Is broken by mounds of blackberry bushes ;

O here it was one night we came—

You said you were sure some great French
painter

Would love. . . .

HE. The blackberries taste the same,—

The touch of your hand's the same, but
fainter—

Dear ! there's a sickening doubt in my heart—
Are you wraith or real ? You keep arm's
length—

I seek you ever ;—we drift apart—

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

What if I overcame you by strength?
To clasp and hold you. . . .

SHE. Follow me
To the water's edge. What do you see
Under the willow?

HE. (*Following her thought*) There's the boat,
In you scramble!
Your petticoat
Caught on a bramble!

SHE. (*Laughing*) What a billock
You made! It vexed
The cautious newt,
Surprised the rat . . .
Irresolute,
The water-hen
With brood afloat
Starts away. . . .

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

HE. (*Anxiously*) What then?

SHE. A boat's half-human, surely,
Curts'ying so demurely,
Treading superbly under
The deep green river-bosom,
Gliding aslant, to sunder
Blossom from imaged blossom. . . .

HE. If what I think be true,
An hour here we've lain ;—
Surely immortal you
And I are born again !
You bear no hue of death,
But seem that low-lashed girl
Unknowable but dear . . .
Soft as of old your breath,
Loose as of old that curl
Dangles over your ear—

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

But no surrender now,
Passionate, full of fear,
Flings you on to my breast,
Smiling, and yet aghast,
Triumphing, yet distressed,—
How shall I win you fast?
Whisper me, only . . . how—

SHE. (*Avoiding him*) How magically expands
Our bright unruffled pathway, reach by reach,
From willowed shore to shingled beach. . . .
Slants ever on and on between
Banks only high enough to screen
The whole world out. Grey-green
The rushes nod,
So scarcely stirred, where languorously floats
Some old, old River God.
Time has laid aside his scythe, to twirl his
thumbs,

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

As through the poplars soft the music comes,
Where nymph and satyr, undisturbed, may
laze. . . .

Perhaps 'tis Pan who plays. . . .

HE. The sky brims with this river,
This river with the sky.
Very low, or high—
Which?—float you and I
In a white cloud curled,
Watching bustle by
A gnat, the clever
Little . . . Quietly!
What if that's the World
Buzzing away,—
Wings with vapour pearly!

SHE. Rest! and quiet thee! Here, on the
stream,
Turmoil and action of speech be flown!

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Equally, evenly, flow on, dream !
Lull us a little, then us . . . both . . . drown !
Blood-red on thine azure heart, a leaf
Shows how colour is kind to decay ;
O gild for us the close of our brief
Summer, when, used, we may drift away. . . .

HE. (*Reaching out to her*) Your face is turned
away,—

You still withhold your hands ;
Are you a spectre, say ?
Or She who understands
Better than all the world to lay
Healing over the bands
That Pain has girt me on ?
Already I feel strength
Flow in, and weakness gone ;—
Is to be cured, at length,
To lose your benison ?

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

SHE. Shall we never climb again the steep
street leading

Up from the river to the Abbey buttresses—
How ill-set the cobbles! and the path wants
weeding—

Do we prefer it grassy? All my heart says yes!
Homely are the houses, and the folk so simple;
The old bow-windows bulge beneath the shading
eaves;

When the panes were spun there stayed in each
a dimple;—

Softly through the twilight our beech-tree
sheds its leaves.

Dead against the sky stand our own queer gables
Over windows twain, and the narrow, stiff-
latched door

Giving on the stairs,—Look, dear, how the fables
Carven on the rail dance as we go up!

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

HE.

What more ?

SHE. In the firelit dusk, let's muse upon our
City ;

The chimes of it, its street-cries, silence, or
alarms,

Moving us to shame or pride,—more to mirth
and pity,—

What more should we need but your arms
beneath my arms ?

HE. (*Trying to draw down her head*) Bend
down, and deep within these eyes
Sink thine own vision, till our spirits meet,
And in each other lose identities.

Then, . . . no more Me and Thee, nor Thee
and Me,

But only one, that's Us,—shall rise and be !

(She removes herself, and muses.)

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

SHE. O what a leisure shall be ours
When, from the mask-and-buskin clay
A formless spirit slips away,
And on its tireless pinion scours
An everlasting azure plane
I cannot tell you of,—who knows
How to describe the utmost hopes
For which our mortal being gropes ?
We shall muse on them, I suppose,
Who mix our clay with clay again,
And we shall wonder at their mien,—
Their tears and fears, and dumb sur-
mise—
Where will they put us ?

HE. (*Following her thought*) Quiet lies
My head, if closed your hands between !
And we will watch your hands enearthed
About my temples, and my lips

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Upon your mortal breast, whence slips
The heat of life. . . .

So, snugly berthed
In some old vineyard,—so I pray,—
Out of my shoulders,—whence its strength,—
Out of your bosom,—whence its sweet,—
Shall grow some royal vine at length,
That, under the enlivening beat
Of wind and rain, and season's change,
And Sun's persuasion, shall unfold
Its wings, whose varying colours range
Through all the greens,—on stem of gold.

Under the wall of whitened stone
We'll watch its tendrils clutch and cling,—
We, spirit, brooding, hovering,
Over our dusty-mouldered bone,
From which proceeds the clusters thrown
In baskets that the vintners bring ;—

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

SHE. Then we, in spirit, stay to hear
The vintners' scold, and jest, and song,
Over the clay that once we were,—
Pressing the fruits that all belong
To us ;—then in the precious juice,
In gold and purple bravely clad,
Our reunited clay and soul
Shall pass the lips that woo the bowl,
Inform the drinker's heart,—induce
Our children's children to be glad.

HE. Now if to have is but to lose,—I pray
Draw in my spirit through your lips, and let
Me lose myself in thee, and thus alway
Have thee, and be thee, and myself forget !

(HE tries to clasp her in his arms, and
finds himself alone in the dark.)

SHE. (*Very far away*) O man that hungereth,
Wilt thou never, O never, be filled ?

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

The winds are big with thy wasted breath,
The ground is wet with tears thou hast spilled,—
Wilt never cease till death ?
O Pride that will not stoop,
Learn, there are chains and bars
Love may not break. His strength will droop
Ere He circle with the stars !

Yet who despiseth Love
As little and incomplete,
Learns by losing Love
How it was sweet !
Love has blest and curst
—So long as we endure—
Me to weep and lure
You, . . . and You to thirst !

HE. (*Waking up*) Back to the cold grey morn,
The land of dreamless day,—

FANTASY OF THE SICK-BED

Swift as the foam on the waves' back borne,
I am spirited away. . . .
Sweeter than when it was now seems
What has been. . . . Well . . . thank Heaven
for Dreams !

POEMS

1

AFTERNOON TEA.

Ah! How do you do? (The game begins!
Do my eyes show how my heart must bleed?
Yours don't, or you doctor them wonderfully
. . . dear!)

Who is he? . . . with the head like a pear,
And the indrawn cheeks of a . . . Gondolier?
He founded a Home for the Fishless Finns!
Who, he thought, were about to disappear;
Yes . . . quite original . . . guaranteed!

(How many times, how many weeks,
Must we meet like this? . . . I know there's fun
In all illicit things . . . but it palls.

AFTERNOON TEA

When I think I have only just begun
To make you feel . . . the curtain falls
From your eyes . . . in the midst of this crowd,
we're one,

And our secret's safe . . . except for your cheeks,
Where the spirit of all temptation speaks
As plain as if, at some recognized shrine,
We'd been sanctioned by all these . . . swine !)

Must I take this cup to the Dowager ?
Too bad. . . . He ! he ! (across the room
Our eyes converse . . . do you look at her
Jealous . . . ? I said "The Dowager,"
And so she is, for me.) The bloom
On those hydrangeas, isn't it fine ?
Two lumps, if you please. Dear me, it's wet !
. . . I saw him on Thursday, he seemed quite
well !

(To prove I mean love, I'd burn in Hell !)

AFTERNOON TEA

Come out to the garden . . . September's here !
The Links are close . . . they've a capital view !
(A dove-coloured rain-cloud's abrush with the
blue,

But all the humid lawn and wood,
Scented and flashing, now they're soaked,
And redolent always of Love and you,
Won't heal the hurt of your eyes ! . . .) I
choked

With laughing nearly. . . . Wasn't it good !

(Eyes, I know what you mourn to say,
We have argued it all before !
You think it will spoil what I have to do ?
Some manhood I've pretensions to,
Better than anyone you know,
What's a man called who shirks a risk ?
I may win or lose . . . meanwhile I throw . . .
Better to sink in the void with you,

AFTERNOON TEA

Than survive alone to find the shore !)
The head is fine, but, in its way,
I prefer the one with the disc !

(That blouse of yours, the colour of cream,
With lace that froths right up to your ear . . .)
He walks as if he went by steam !
Ha ! ha ! (Could you disrobe, my dear
From that, as easily as your eyes
Let slip your naked soul, what a dream
Of neck and shoulder you'd lay bare !)
A pretty room, that dado, now,
Is really . . . (Darling, if you dare
To screw up your lips like that I'll kick
Prudence, the sneak, to his master, Nick !)
. . . Thank you, it's most refreshing ! . . . (How
Do I find my tea ? You touch the cup
With one slim finger . . . I'll drink it up
Though it be blood !) . . . The eye can roam

AFTERNOON TEA

So restfully on that weather-worn,
Moss-covered old red barn, with its vane . . .
Might be a Morland? . . . say Old Crome!
(Suddenly dumb! . . . why, I'd be slain
To bring the mischief back to your face,
If only that bubble of dainty lace
You call your handkerchief were torn
To tie up the bleeding place! . . .
But you're a woman . . . O the scorn!)

A piece of cake! . . . (Again you plead;
You only inspire an hour's lust,
Then fall forever, . . . a thing of use,
Mortgaged away. If what you need
Is this performance twice a week
Till you are seventy. . . . Well! you must!
Pour out tea to your heart's disgust. . . .
Amid chatter of fools . . . can you deduce
This as your destiny?)

AFTERNOON TEA

(Look at the pale ethereal cloud
That topples heavily, and shows
The murky side of Heavenly snows,
A cloud's disgrace . . . but it helps the grass
To live! And we? We boast . . . and pass
For never having quite allowed
Nature to have her will with us! . . .
She *is* so . . . miscellaneous.
—In fact, by our advice, impure . . .
Is aught too good to make manure?
Pray, what is Purity? . . . Who knows?)

No, thank you, I'd much rather walk.
(O pretty blush!) The barn? (Again!
You're all confusion . . . for you can see
I refused a lift, in order to be
Allowed to stay with you . . . and talk,
And you wish to stay and . . . talk, with
me.)

AFTERNOON TEA

Thank you, no, it's out of my way !
(I'll tell you what we'll do, one day,
We'll give Society the slip,
And dress you up in a pinafore,
Then you shall teach me how to skip, . . .
I'll skip till you can't laugh any more, . . .
And smother you in the hay !)

Good-bye, Mr. . . . much better, thanks !
Quite convalescent ! . . . (There they go,
As dribbles off the mountain flanks
The weary weight of winter snow . . .
And Spring, our Spring, is here . . . and so . . .

When Mary comes in to take the tray,
I'd like to tell her, dear old soul,
The reason why, day after day,
She finds me loitering, when the whole
Of the company's gone, is that I stay

AFTERNOON TEA

To be drowned in your fits of glum despair,
Cling to the hope of a kiss I stole,
So waked to life by the raillery
In your eyes and voice . . . at last to be
Caught and burned alive in your hair!)

VARIATION.

“ I adjure ye, O Daughters of Jerusalem, . . .
That ye stir not up, nor awaken Love until
It please.”

Song of Songs.

AWAKE not Love until Love’s time is come !
A magic cobweb all about He wove ;
Then hid Himself within the budding clove. . . .
Tread softly ! Lest beneath some pebble, dumb,
Ye rouse what ye can never silence more. . . .
Brush not the buds that swell in every grove ;
He lurks, close-curled, beneath their scented
gum :
In every streamlet winter clasps so numb
He will outrush, o’erbrim, destroy ; therefore
Awake not Love until Love’s time is come !

VARIATION

Though He came not to those that vainly
strove
To find His fount, and force Him to outpour ;
Yet, when the appointed days shall reach their
sum,
With sweetened torment, and with triumph
sore,
He'll nestle in your heart, where ne'er He
throve
In His sublime capriciousness before.
Then shall buds burst, and blossoms foam ;
bees hum.
Awake not Love until Love's time is come !

YOUTH AT THE PROW, AND PLEASURE AT THE HELM.

ON azure seas, that summer
Has burnished, as with oil,
There drifts a ship of cedar,
O'erlaid with golden foil ;
Her stem prints smiling ripples,
Her pennon droops and trails,
Where cooing doves encircle
Her pretty silken sails.

Pleasure leaves idly swinging
The helm, her only care,
The jewels in her girdle,
The tiring of her hair ;

YOUTH AT THE PROW

For Time, from out his treasure
Of golden moments stored,
Has given her the measure
Of her demands, and Pleasure
Will fling them all abroad !

Youth, at the prow, surrounded
By youthful company,
Smiles to the wide, unsounded,
Untried, but smiling sea ;
All his companions, new-found friends,
Fresh is each sound, each hue,
New is Zephyr, and her caresses,
New are his garland's fluttered ends,
Fresh is each thought, each power, each whim,
New his perception, all is new,
New each and all to him.

Heedless they drift for ever
Upon the cloudless calms ;

YOUTH AT THE PROW

Their cargo is of tapestries,
Sweet essences, and balms ;
Their mariners are maidens
That handle lute and lyre,
No harsh, shrill cries or chant they raise,
But thus ascends their choir :
“ O not before the morning
Shall any storm arise ;
See the young stars adorning
The liquid, cloudless skies ;
The soft blue East, the zenith,
All verdant, shade away
To shameless West
Where glow, confessed,
The ardours of the day.
Light up our scented torches,
The sea shall seem afire !
Bring out the meat, the fruit, the wine,
Viands to our desire ;

YOUTH AT THE PROW

Then join us in the dances
In maddening circles round,
Dropping the panther skin that scorches,
Flinging the coronets of vine,
And sink, as night advances,
To silence, rapture-crowned !”

- FIRST LOVE.

BETWEEN the birch and aspen, that drooped to
touch her head,

She came. No bird avoided, no pilfering
squirrel fled.

The woods, with dark half flooded, breast-high,
in shadow lay;

She ruled the moss and grasses. . . . I longed
to own her sway.

Queen of all sound, scent, colour, noiseless, but
half perceived,

She moved through new-born blossom of
branches freshly leaved.

FIRST LOVE

She trod the green-sheathed lilies ; behind her
broke the dawn,
That after her in rapture burst, as if to beg
her praise athirst,
To gold and emerald, azure, crimson, sable,
saffron, fawn.

Where'er she trod, the lawns like peacock's
pride were diaper'd ;
Behind her followed song more sweet than ever
morning stirred ;
The bees were busy near her ; the lilac and the
lime
Vied in outpouring incense, with bay, and mint,
and thyme.

The woods stood in her bondage, in twining
creepers wreathed ;
The four winds waited on her, nor any zephyr
breathed ;

FIRST LOVE

The azure wound itself about with fine-spun
gossamers,
The tinkling streams, the sun's low beams, were
only hers, all hers !

She is not held by any, she is not seen from far,
She rules a space—then passes—as between
clouds, a star ;
It is but her that ever the untried vision sees,
Treading the green-sheathed lilies, beneath the
drooping trees.

TO THE ANGEL OF THE DAWN.

O ANGEL pitiful,
That silently heralds the Dawn !
Stoop with thy wings indrawn,
Thy very glance is cool.

Receding tides of Sleep
Have left me here, the prey
Of imaginings, wistful, deep—
Things that may never be. . . .

Sleep's sea, where drowned I lay,
Has ebbed away from me,
Its stealthy magic ripples creep
Nor moisten me with spray.

TO THE ANGEL OF THE DAWN

On the shore of an unknown day,
An undiscovered land,
A waste of sand and stones, I stand ;
Dim-litten, grey, are sky and sea,
The arid beach is grey.

O Pardoner ! I pray :
Look on me ! Make a few
Green herbs to grow—a draught of dew
To fall on me, that so I may
Strive in Thy wake, anew !

PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE.

I SET it in the courtyard there,
To soak with quivering golden light ;
If any statue lives, this might,
And O, I long to call it “ Her ” !

For in whatever detail, this,
A woman’s shape, has failed or erred,
I have not halted, but preferred
“ She will be ! ” to the cold “ She is ! ”

Her eyes and lips are moist with dew,
And in the glow the morning wreathes
About her—See, she moves and breathes,
She is the consort that I knew !

PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE

Night's starry crown is round her brow,
Night's cold persuasion in her breath ;
Dost summon me, O lovely Death ?
Ah ! Death in thee were life enow !

I will embrace thee, come what dare !
Into thy bosom, this last time
Receive the heart that beat on thine,
Let Heaven fall and crush me there !

Or have I kindled once again
The spark I feared was quenched for aye ?
Am I thy Dawn, foreboding Day,
Or thou my Night's tranquillity ?

If I have faith to kiss the lips
That, curve for curve, and line for line,
I cut like those that once were mine,
Shall I experience eclipse,

PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE

Sculptor by Statue, Flesh by Stone?
Or shall Life, Love, and Hope supreme
Abase the Fact before the Dream,
And Death yield up to me my own?

NORTHERLY.

OUT of the North, the wind
Harries the northern shore,
Batters us, beats us blind,
Flinging into the face
The spray we fled before,
When first, of old, our race
Raven'd here, uncontrolled !

Fierce as this wind, we came
Out of the North, of old,
Bearded, as with flame,
Blown by the wind, . . . and, bold
We blustered : “ Who shall tame
The sea-born Dragon’s brood,

NORTHERLY

That argue not, but claim
'This land . . . not bought nor woo'd
But seized by onslaught rude,
Held, by fear of our Name ?"

Breast and brow we turn,
And our halting pulses flow ;
Ruddy the embers glow
That had almost ceased to burn,
When, out of the North, there blew
'These winds. And O ! we yearn
For our helmets' brazen wings,
For the grind of the forty oars
As the Dragon lifts and swings.

Never to come again
Out of the North with song,
Strong, as men are strong,
Lustily, grimly forth !

NORTHERLY

Here, in the saltless town,
Here on the passive plain,
We feel the wind of our race complain
How we have dwindled down !

O Thou, our Wind of the North,
When shall a thought of shame
For those, our old sea-lives,
Darken the sea, sun-down,
In whose incredible flame
The sea-bird dives ?

THE TRUMPET.

TRUMPET, silver-throated, oft I think thy soul
forsakes thee,

When thou hangest voiceless from my shoulder ;
—dumb, thou'rt dead !

Speak ! It is my breath I lend thee, Trumpet,
that awakes thee,

Gives thee voice, and sets it free ! Then, light
and high, be sped !

Voice of the Trumpet ! Like a mocking spirit,
thou beatest

The air with pearly-feathered wings, whence,
dazzling, radiate

THE TRUMPET

Courage, sun-illumined, and Might. Then thou
retreatest,
Pinions furled, within thy brazen home, to lie
in wait !

Take then the breath from my lips, O Trumpet !
thou bindest
All thy servants the best of their strength,
their love, to yield,
Deep in their hearts the springs of shame and
pride thou findest,
Oft they need thee, while they wait the fortune
of the field.

Ancient among us, thou, exceeding the genera-
tions—
Of famous sires soundest the pæan and
requiem ;

THE TRUMPET

Plainer thy speech than the varying babble of
the nations,
Whose unborn warriors hear, when thou callest
them.

THE BARQUE.

ONCE, at the harbour's mouth, we watched a
barque,

Her slim and delicate supple body swayed
Under the dazzling plumage she displayed,
Whose gorgeous whiteness made her shadow
seem,

On her bright path, a touch of tender, dark
Regret for the too swift progress that she
made—

Like one from whom Life's buffets fall away
Before her kindly, grave, Great-Lady air.
As a Great Lady lifts her 'broidered skirt
Out of some narrow alley's dirt,

THE BARQUE

Her sails were furled, she glided in,
Making the quays look mean, ignobly changed . . .
Noting below, in her reflected twin,
If, in her toilet, aught were disarranged . . .
She passed, fluttered no flag, nor made a sign.

VISION.

ASLEEP, one summer, at the garden gate,
I dreamed I woke, and found no garden there . . .
Only a throne of sun-warmed earth and air
O'er-canopied with elms. In royal state
Reclined there, one I might not look upon
Too closely . . . feeling in her glance the fused
Intensity of all the Suns that shone
From April to October. While, bemused,
My eyes sought not her eyes, to make her vest
I saw the apples' varying cheeks were used ;
An orchard hung despoiled about her breast ;
And all the blue the river ever held
Made up her zone, and glittering sheaves her
skirt.

VISION

Sweet as the birds in choir, her voice compelled
The fawn to listen, dog to crouch, . . . while man
Willing or not, upon her errands ran.

I woke, and looking, found no one. Instead
The garden, orchard, river, field, and plain
Spread endlessly before my feet again
Their far blue distance, welcoming. I said :

/ “ I have seen one who knows us utterly ;
All that we know, must have its source in her ;
She is our Mother, and our Taskmaster ;
We tread her paths, not even knowing why ;
We lift her loads, not ever meaning to.
Often she seems to frown ;—and then—we sigh
To escape from her whose very life we share
In scent and outline, cadence, rhythm, hue—
And come upon her, smiling,—everywhere !”

THE MOTHER.

(TO HER SONS CROWNED
AND CRUCIFIED.)

THE salvoes and carillon have shook the Minster
towers,

The sky is dark with pennons and the elders go
to meet you,

Huzzahing sets a-tremble windows, whence they
fling you flowers

Before your feet, as Heroes ! Half divine ! they
cry to greet you.

But I—I know you better—when the drums
are beat to bursting,

I see you weary-eyed, I know nobody under-
stands

THE MOTHER

'That ye are little, foot-sore, weak, and ravenously
thirsting,

As when I held you helpless in my hands !

• • • • •
Oil upon the faggots ! Why such heavy stakes
and fetters ?

Why so many guards then ? do they deem that
you could harm them ?

I cannot hear your crimes read out, . . . these
that they call your betters

Deserve indeed to suffer, if they think You
could alarm them ! . . .

Nay, what have ye done, that they should fear
ye more than hate ye ?

Nay, what could ye do, who are so little and
inept ?

Let me tell them how ye oft were lost or
beaten . . . how ye

Clung about my shoulder, cried, and slept !

RONDEAU: IN ABSENCE.

FOR all those times I could not see your face,
And fainted . . . like a weary sun, that climbs
A steep cloud-chasm, crumbling down apace,
And blinding him with ruin. . . . For disgrace
Of having doubted you. . . . For all those times
When, banished from your favour, I forgot
That Doubt destroys Belief, that alters not
With fortunes changed. . . . When, jealous of
my lot,

I hastened to you, hazarding such rhymes . . .
O grant forgiveness, blessing, and a smile !
O take a promise that the little while
We spend here, shall but serve to reconcile
“I am” with “I would be,” . . . for all those
times !

ON A CORNISH HEADLAND.

THE mist creeps up round Lyonesse
With sound of dripping in the dark,
And low, weird wailing of distress,
About a land all numb and stark—
With lurid gleaming through the night,
And fitful shadowing all the day,
With muffled gloom of that last fight
When, beaten, Arthur passed away.

The tide comes in to Lyonesse
With smoking spray and wheeling gull,
It clammers into each recess
Where flowers tremble for a lull,

ON A CORNISH HEADLAND

With shriek and chuckle saturnine,
With speed that shocks, and rage that fumes,
With clamour of a charging line,
Where shake a thousand snow-white plumes.

The sun goes down on Lyonesse,
Gilding grim rocks, that seem like bones
Of all the knights that used to press
Upon the heathen . . . all the stones
Bear stains and dents of combat . . . So
Heroes and Traitors petrify ;
Glorious mists and colours glow
In utmost peace on strife gone by.

THE FORSAKEN ROOM.

THE Mirror gleams : "I saw, but will I tell?"
A pin : "She dropped me, pity my despair!"
A comb : "I glow—was burnished in her
hair"—
A rose plucked from her wafts : "Her lips did
spell
What I will not repeat, who loved to dwell
Close to the little cross that nestled where
Sorrow for Wrong, and Courage 'neath Despair
In her warm blood leapt—leapt unconquerable!"

Swallows rejoice to build beneath these eaves
Where jasmine clings ; the sun among its
leaves

THE FORSAKEN ROOM

(All fluttered, for she pressed them back last
night)

Traces in sweet deceptive light and shade
Her head, upon the pillow where 'twas laid—
Her fingers, on the book where she did write.

A PORTRAIT.

IN a wide, stone-flagged passage, once I saw
A woman lift a platter of white wood,
Whereon jugs, loaves, knives, high-piled dishes
stood.

Her eyes, far-seeing councillors, did draw
Age-old blue wisdom from the skies, while Law,
Implicit on her forehead, seemed to brood.
Her lips were heralds, ever proclaiming good ;
For riches, in her hair shone red-gold, raw.

She smiled, with some fair city's welcoming
grace,
Before whose gleaming turrets Night has flown,

A PORTRAIT

Whose higher parts are Heaven's resting-place,
Whose very fabric is Earth-beauty's own ;
Earth-plenty teemed within her wide embrace,
About her walls Spring's spicy airs were blown.

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